

Original Research Report



Challenges Facing the Teaching and Learning of Macramé Household Crafts in Tertiary Institutions in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges in teaching and learning of Macramé household crafts and develop a suitable instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. The study adopted Research and development (R and D) method. The study area was tertiary institutions in Abia State. Eighteen lecturers and forty-one students formed the population for the study making a total of fifty-nine subjects. Data obtained from the study through a well-structured questionnaire were analysed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon Test. The result revealed seven challenges being encountered in teaching crafts in the institutions. The study also showed that out of the fourteen challenges identified, thirteen challenges were encountered by students in the institutions while learning macramé household crafts. Overall, the study shows that no statistically significant difference exists between the challenges encountered in teaching and learning of macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State, hence the need for an improvement. The study further developed and examined an instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts which the lecturers confirmed will help in improving the teaching and learning of macramé crafts. All the null hypotheses were accepted, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in both the Universities and those in the College of Education.

Keywords: Challenges, Crafts, Learning, Macramé, Teaching

1. Introduction

Education is very vital and of great necessity in everyday life and is the greatest tool for enhancing the development and sustainability of nations if it is functional. Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge and skills of a person or group of people is transferred from one generation to another through teaching and training (Guzavicius et al., 2015). This teaching and training can be achieved in different tiers of education viz; nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It was thus based on this that tertiary institutions are seen as a place which provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for teachers, entrepreneurs, scientists and a myriad of other personnel. These trained individuals develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economics and with the increasing importance of knowledge as a main driver of growth, knowledge accumulation and application have become the major factor in economic development. Entrepreneurship education therefore becomes imperative to help equip students with employable skills needed for self-reliance, productivity and functional life.

Craft is an art or type of skill where useful and decorative articles are made completely by hand or by using simple tools. Bayman (1999) also defined crafts as a wide range of creative and design activities that are related to making things with one's hands and skills, including work with textiles, papers, plant fibres, yarns etc. Macramé as an art form can utilise both natural and synthetic yarns which are readily yielded to knotting in various forms and combination. The concept of macramé art is to use decorative knots to construct a variety of handcrafted items (Ackah-Arthur, 2016). It is of utmost importance that Home Economics which is a skill-oriented subject that equips learners with saleable skills and knowledge (such as macramé crafts) be efficaciously taught in tertiary institutions so as to help graduates become self-employed upon graduation and at the same time contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the family and society at large. Hence, to bridge the gap, this study has undertaken the development of an instructional manual for teaching and learning Macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Presently, unemployment and unemployed graduates have become a serious challenge to the Nigerian Government because of her inability to provide adequate employment opportunities for her citizens. One of the causes is the educational system that has failed to impart sufficient skills to many graduates being churned out from our institutions of higher learning. Most tertiary institutions that study Home Economics do not fortify their graduates with skills in the area of Clothing and Textile due to some of the factors discovered from a research which showed that teaching of crafts in Home Economics has been faced with many challenges such as lack of instructional materials, inadequate textbooks, inadequacy of knowledge on the lecturers' part amongst others, and this has thus led to the nature of programmes run in these institutions (Arubayi, 2010). Widespread Unemployment is a Failure of educational system that does not impart sufficient skills to many graduates leading to increased poverty rate, crime rate and poor standard of living. It was thus on this note that the researcher deemed it fit to develop an instructional manual for teaching and learning macramé

household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this research was to identify the challenges in teaching and learning of Macramé household crafts and develop a suitable instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. Specific purposes are as follows:

- (a) Identify the challenges encountered by Home Economics lecturers in teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State.
- (b) Identify the challenges encountered by Home Economics students in learning macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State.
- (c) Determine the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts.
- (d) Determine the contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (a) What are the challenges encountered by Home Economics lecturers in teaching crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State?
- (b) What are the challenges encountered by Home Economics students in learning crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State?
- (c) What are the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts?
- (d) What are the contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts?

1.4. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

- (a) HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the challenges of teaching macramé household crafts.
- (b) HO₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the challenges of learning macramé household crafts.
- (c) HO₃: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching and learning macramé household crafts.
- (d) HO₄: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the contents of the manual for teaching and learning macramé household crafts.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Design for the Study

Research and development (R and D) methodology by Gall et al. (2007) was used. Research and Development was used to design new product and procedures, followed by the application of research methods to field test, evaluate and refine product and procedures until they meet specified criteria of effectiveness, quality or similar standards. Page | 83

2.1.1. Ethics Statement

This research was ethically cleared by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Home Economics, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria. All respondents provided informed consent verbally before completing the study instrument.

2.2. Area of the Study

For the purpose of this study, the study area included all tertiary institutions which study Home Economics in the state which include: Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu, Abia State, Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State, and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State. Although Abia State University offers Home Economics, at the time of this research there were no students admitted in the department. The choice of the area of study was based on sociological perception that students in the study area need saleable skills to enable them to be self-employed in cases where employment is not attainable. The present study, when published, is geared towards providing strategic guidance for students and teachers to enable them learn macramé crafts with ease in the study area.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of lecturers and students in the tertiary institutions that offer Home Economics programmes in Abia State. Information gotten from the personnel department of both tertiary institutions show that the population of lecturers of Home Economics are thirteen (13) in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, (3) Abia State University, Uturu and five (5) in Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu. According to the document gotten from the Office of the Registrar (Admissions) of both institutions, the population of undergraduate final year students in the Home Economics department of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture are thirty – two (32), whilst in Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu, the population of undergraduate students in their final year are nine (9). The total population of both the lecturers and the students is fifty-nine (59). Owing to the relatively manageable size of the population of lecturers teaching Home Economics and students of Home Economics in the selected tertiary institutions, the entire population was involved in the study.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

This research study utilised a well-structured questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers to collect data for this study. It was developed through extensive review of literature based on the research questions. The instrument was divided into two major parts, I and II. Part I obtained information on demographic data of the respondents, while part II was further sub-divided into various sections designed to seek for information to address

the research questions. The questionnaire was structured to make use of 4-point rating scale in order to elicit the responses needed from the respondents. The four point rating scale has response categories of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by three experts. The experts' comments and suggestions were employed in modifying the questions and items. The reliability of the instrument was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency which yielded a coefficient of 0.81.

2.5. Data Collection Technique

Data was collected in two stages. In the first stage, the researchers with the help of two research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire by hand to the respondents in each institution. An introductory letter obtained from the Head of Department of Home Economics/Hospitality Management and Tourism, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike was presented to departmental heads of the selected institutions to obtain approval before administering the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were issued and collected within a week. A total of 59 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, giving a 100% retrieval. In the second stage, the researchers obtained information on steps involved in producing different styles of macramé as well as principles in designing the instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts. The data for these were collected by the researchers through consulting literature on crafts. Also in this stage, the instructional manual was evaluated by experts.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data obtained from the research questions were analyzed statistically using means and standard deviation. A mean of 2.50 was regarded as a bench mark for decision marking. Values above 2.50 is regarded as agreement to the items while values below 2.50 regarded as disagreement to the items. The hypotheses were tested using Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon Test.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean responses of Home Economics lecturers on challenges encountered in teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia state.

No.	Challenges encountered in teaching macramé household crafts	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Lack of aids and funds from government	3.70	0.512	C.E
2	Lack of teaching aid/ equipment for teaching craft	3.38	0.623	C.E
3	Poor library facilities	3.38	0.821	C.E
4	Shortage of specialist room for teaching craft	3.39	0.750	C.E
5	Time allocated to teaching crafts in the time table is always too short	3.00	1.115	C.E
6	Students negative attitude towards learning craft	3.01	0.983	C.E
7	Inadequate current craft textbooks	3.45	0.743	C.E
8	Lack of competencies on the part of the lecturers	2.15	1.113	NAC

SD- standard deviation, C.E- challenge encountered, NAC- not a challenge, \bar{X} – mean responses of lecturers

Table 1 shows that seven of the eight challenges investigated were being encountered in teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State as their mean scores were above the criterion level $\bar{X}=2.50$.

Table 2: Mean responses of students on challenges encountered by Home Economics students in learning crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State

No.	Challenges faced in learning macramé household crafts	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Inadequate equipment and facilities	3.75	0.472	C.E
2	High cost of materials for craft work	3.43	0.604	C.E
3	Limited time allocated to practical	3.45	0.708	C.E
4	Lack of qualified/ skilled lecturers in craft	2.61	1.015	C.E
5	Poor perception of the importance of crafts by students and parents	2.54	0.934	C.E
6	Students cannot provide materials for practical	2.96	0.911	C.E
7	Poor funding from the school	3.08	0.808	C.E
8	Students lack interest in practical classes because the projects given to them do not reflect their needs and interests	1.98	1.069	NAC
9	Lack of simplified books on craft	3.64	0.686	C.E
10	Inadequate supervision of students’ practical	2.96	0.873	C.E
11	Lecturers’ incompetence	2.22	1.055	C.E
12	Absence of streamline craftwork	3.32	0.843	C.E
13	Inadequate curriculum	3.01	0.792	C.E
14	Inadequate instructional material	3.21	0.741	C.E
Average		3.01	0.822	

SD- standard deviation, C.E- challenge encountered, NAC- not a challenge, \bar{X} – mean responses of respondents

Table 2 shows that out of the fourteen challenges identified, thirteen of them were accepted to be encountered in learning macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State because their mean scores were above the criterion level $\bar{X}=2.50$.

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on the objectives of the manual for teaching macramé crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State

No.	Objectives of the instructional manual for teaching Macramé household crafts	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Develop saleable skills required for successful career in macramé crafts	4.0	0	A
2	Develop positive attitude and proper working habits for	4.0	0	A

	self-reliance			
3	Develop adequate skills necessary to sustain students' interest in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
4	Guide students to acquire proper skills in macramé crafts	4.0	0	A
5	Provide students with adequate knowledge in macramé crafts	4.0	0	A
6	Develop students in necessary creative skills essential for smooth transition from school environment to work place	4.0	0	A
7	Develop self-confidence and maturity in career goals in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
8	Provide students with opportunity to progress in their career pursuits	3.93	0.26	A
9	Provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in making half knots in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
10	Provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in making alternate square knots in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
11	Provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in making square knots in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
12	Provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in making double half hitch knot in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
13	Develop adequate skills and application of macramé techniques	4.0	0	A
14	Improve student's employability in macramé crafts	4.0	0	A
15	Provide the students enhanced individualized development of skills and knowledge in macramé crafts	3.93	0.26	A
16	Demonstrate ways of making desired macramé articles	3.93	0.26	A
17	Show the instructional materials and required in macramé making	4	0	A
18	Make different articles using macramé skills	4	0	A
Average		3.99	0.043	

SD- standard deviation, A- accepted, \bar{X} - mean responses of respondents

Table 3 shows that all the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching macramé household craft are accepted by respondents as the mean scores of the objectives were above the level $\bar{X}=2.50$.

Table 4: Mean responses of respondents on the contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State

No.	Contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Study concept of macramé craft	4.0	0	A
2	List the abbreviations in macramé craft	4.0	0	A
3	List the articles used in producing each macramé	4.0	0	A
4	Study the concept of each article that is to be produced	3.93	0.48	A
5	Study the uses of the article to be produced	4.0	0	A
6	The step-by-step procedure for producing each craft.	4.0	0	A
7	Make different macramé articles	4.0	0	A
8	Ability to identify macramé knots used producing macramé articles	4.0	0	A
Average		3.99	0.060	

SD- standard deviation, A- accepted, \bar{X} – mean responses of respondents

Table 4 depicts that the contents of the manual for teaching and learning macramé in tertiary institutions in Abia State because all the mean scores were above the criterion level $\bar{X}=2.50$.

Table 5: Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon Test used in testing the hypotheses (comparing the mean difference for the two Categories).

	Hypotheses	U- value	P- value	\bar{X}	SD
HO ₁	There is no significant difference between significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the University and those in the College of Education on the challenges in teaching macramé household crafts.	849	0.564	3.70	0.512
HO ₂	There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics students in the Universities and in the College of Education on the challenges of learning macramé household crafts.	523.5	0.173	3.74	0.489
HO ₃	There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts.	793	0.324	3.61	0.665

HO ₄	There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the University and those in the College of Education on the contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts.	903	0.957	3.72	0.624
Average				3.82	0.327

HO₁ (U= 849, P= 0.566): The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the challenges of teaching macramé household crafts.

HO₂ (U=523.5, P= 0.173): The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics students in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the challenges of learning macramé household crafts.

HO₃ (U=793, P= 0.324): The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the objectives of the instructional manual for teaching macramé household crafts.

HO₄ (U= 903, P= 0.957): The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of Home Economics lecturers in the Universities and those in the College of Education on the contents of the manual for teaching macramé household crafts.

Skills that are being taught/learnt in Home Economics under the umbrella of Clothing and Textile which are referred to as crafts needs to be taught/learnt effectively as they can help in poverty reduction and job creation. According to the findings, the challenges identified in the course of this study are: lack of teaching aid/equipment for teaching craft, inadequate current craft textbooks, students' negative attitude towards learning craft, Inadequate supervision of students' practical, high cost of materials for craft work amongst others. All these challenges need to be addressed. The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students in the respective challenges encountered in teaching and learning crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State. This is in line with studies conducted by Okadigwe and Iyegbu, (2019) and Uwameiye (2019) which showed that lecturers and students are faced with a lot of challenges while teaching and learning crafts. Respondents' responses indicate that teachers and students find it difficult to handle crafts studies because of inadequate instructional materials i.e. reference books. This is in line with the study of Onyeazor (2019) who found that inadequate instructional materials for teachers while teaching and students while learning is a great impediment faced in the teaching Home Economics. This work is anchored on Development theory which draws on a variety of social scientific disciplines and approaches such as improved education, income, skills development and employment. Also, poor funding from the school is regarded as one of the challenges affecting the learning of crafts as the studies of Olaosebikan (2011), Okadigwe and Iyegbu, (2019) and Uwameiye (2019) revealed that in the students' perception, the problems of teaching and learning of Clothing and Textile includes negative attitudes and instructional impediments ranging from inadequate topics and tests, inappropriate methods in the curriculum, lack

of pedagogical skills among teachers, lack of funds and failure of teachers to improvise and utilise instructional materials. It was also outlined by the respondents that some teachers do not have the required skills to handle teaching of crafts in Clothing and Textile and there is insufficient supervision of students' practical sessions. These are in agreement with the study of Obeta (2016) whose research work showed that some lecturers in Clothing and Textile do not show much evidence of skill possession in the teaching of Clothing and Textile and also do not make the course interesting for students. Findings also revealed that since Clothing and Textile is a practical oriented course, insufficient time allocation and lack of teaching aids/equipment adversely affect the teaching of crafts. Another challenge seen in this research work is the poor perception of the importance of crafts by students and parents. According to studies conducted Nwankwo (2007) and Onyeazor (2019), students should be taught crafts to give them opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable them function effectively in the society within the limit of his or her capacity. Obeta (2016) and Okadigwe and Iyegbu, (2019) also encourages that students should be equipped with sufficient skills so as upon graduation they can be self-reliant and also employers of labour.

4. Conclusion

The challenge of teaching and learning of macramé household crafts in tertiary institutions in Abia State were found to include the lack of funds, lack of equipment and materials, inadequate instructional materials, inadequate current craft textbooks, amongst others. The instructional manual developed would benefit both teachers and students because it serves as a practical guide to teachers and prepares students for the challenges they face about new trends in macramé household crafts making. The limitations is that not much work has been done on crafts especially macramé, so there is every need for further instructional manual to be done on crafts generally.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: OE and PE

Formal analysis: OE and PE

Funding acquisition: OE and PE

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Methodology: OE and PE

Data analysis: OE and PE

Writing – original draft, review & editing: OE and PE

Data Availability Statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to corresponding author.

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